

DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND WORK CONSISTENCY

Developing a tool for International Childcare
and Education Center (ICEC Play 'n' Learn)
to enhance consistency through diversity
management

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AFFINE, TIGIST: DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND WORK
 CONSISTENCY

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75 pages, 14 pages of appendices

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ABSTRACT

This research based development project raised diversity management as its central topic of discussion. It began with the definition of the term diversity management and went on describing main paradigms, history of diversity management and important figures behind it. It was also the focus of the study how diversity management is implemented in Finland with specific look at diversity management in early childhood education and care centers.

The research based development project was entitled as Diversity Management and Consistency with a sub title Developing a tool for International Childcare and Education Center (ICEC Play 'n' Learn) to enhance consistency through diversity management. It was done in cooperation with an English-speaking kindergarten which is called International Childcare and Education Center (ICEC). The objective was to develop a tool that can enhance the use of diversity management to improve work consistency and quality in the kindergarten. For that purpose, data was collected through focus group discussion. The method was especially selected to divide informants in to two groups as managers and employees and gather the necessary information. The results that were found proved that the company is rich in diverse workforce and clients. This diversity is also valued by all parties. However, diversity management as a managing tool was not familiar to both the managers and employees. The managers have shared all the techniques, guidelines and policies that they use to keep work consistency and quality. In this research based development project, a conclusion was made that in addition to all the methods, policies and guidelines that are used, it would be beneficial to introduce diversity management as well. The company can maximize benefits of having diverse workforce through diversity based management. It could also be used as a tool to understand why diversity sets challenge to consistency and at the same time be the process to reach the desired consistency. The contents of an intended workshop that was not carried out were changed in to small information package and were sent to the managers via e-mail. The content was mainly to raise awareness and encourage the managers to see how they are also culturally shaped and how that different mental shape affect the way they work. Such awareness was expected to foster so strategic and operational changes that are aimed at recognizing and preserving differences to achieve better results in consistency and other aspects. Keywords: diversity, diversity management, early childhood education, work consistency

Lahden ammattikorkeakoulu
Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden kehittäminen ja johtaminen

Affine, Tivist: DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND WORK

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tässä toimeksiantajalle toteuttava tutkimuksellinen kehittämishanke tutkitaan monimuotoisuuden johtamista. Pro gradu-tutkielman teoriaosuudessa määritellään monimuotoisuuden johtaminen terminä sekä sen paradigmaa, monimuotoisuuden johtamisen historiaa, ja sen tärkeimmät tapahtumat. Tutkielma keskittyy siihen, miten monimuotoisuuden johtamista toteutetaan Suomessa, erityisesti varhaiskasvatuksessa.

Toimeksiantajalle toteuttava tutkimuksellinen kehittämishanke aiheena on monimuotoisuuden johtaminen ja jatkuvuus. Tutkielman alaotsikkona on 'Kuinka International Childcare and Education Center-varhaiskasvatuskeskuksiin voisi kehittää työkalu, jonka avulla saataisiin monimuotoisuuden johtamisen konsepti integroitua opettamisen työhön'. Tutkielman tutkimuspohjainen kehitysprojekti oli toteutettu yhteistyössä kyseisen englanninkielisen varhaiskasvatuskeskuksen kanssa. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli kehittää työkalu, jonka avulla edistettäisiin monimuotoisuuden johtamisen käyttöä opetustyössä parantaakseen työn jatkuvuutta ja opetuksen laatua päiväkodeissa. Tutkimusdataa kerättiin ryhmäkeskustelujen yhteydessä. Menettelytapa jakoi tiedonantajat johtajiin ja työntekijöihin. Tulokset osoittivat, että ICECin sekä henkilökunta että asiakaskunta on hyvin monimuotoista. Johtajat ovat jakaneet kaikki suoritustavat, ohjeet ja käytännöt, joiden ansiosta he ovat saaneet ylläpidettyä työn laatua ja sujuvuutta. Johtopäätöksessä tuli ilmi, että jo käytettävien menettelytapojen, käytäntöjen ja ohjeiden lisäksi olisi hyödyllistä, jos työkuvaan integroitaisiin monimuotoisuuden johtaminen. Varhaiskasvatuskeskus voisi lisätä moninaisen henkilökunnan hyödyt monimuotoisuuden johtamisen konseptin avulla. Sitä voitaisiin myös käyttää työkaluna ymmärtääkseen miksi monimuotoisuus asettaa haasteita jatkuvuudelle ja samalla olla avainprosessi saavuttaakseen haluttu jatkuvuus. Toteuttamattomista aiheista tehtiin pienet tietopaketit, jotka lähetettiin johtajille sähköpostitse.

Avainsanat: monimuotoisuus, monimuotoisuuden johtaminen, varhaiskasvatus, työn jatkuvuus

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1 INTRODUCTION

The history of mankind is a history of diversity and multiculturalism. All ancient civilizations are constituted from people of different race, age and gender. As deep rooted as diversity is, its denial is also huge part of human history. People have given names such as religion, colonization or any other to the wars and power struggles that aimed at homogenizing the multicultural society. (Arredondo 1996, 1.)

Diversity has become one of those words or phrases that everybody uses but no one knows what it exactly means. People use the word according to their views, understandings and biases but no one confirms its actual meaning. Diversity is usually referred as multi-racial, multicultural or multiethnic but it also comes preloaded with people's different views. As simple surface level notion, diversity can be defined as the mixture of similarity and differences. (Roosevelt 1996, 6.)

Roosevelt (1996, 6) defined diversity management as a process and tool which is part of diversity and integration in the society. Organizations especially those that hire people of different backgrounds do need to give special emphasis on how to manage the diverse workforce. Diversity management puts into consideration both heterogeneity and homogeneity of a group.

In today's society, diversity is an important factor to be looked at carefully. It is happening in the society in many different ways. Globalization is changing the demographic picture of employees and clients. People migrate from one part of the world to the other. Aging and other similar factors are changing the demography of the world workforce. Besides, legislations put more pressure on how organizations deal with similarity and difference. Discrimination on bases of age, sex, ethnic origin, nationality or other similar bases are illegal. On the other hand, diversity gives an even wider option for recruiters and job seekers. Diversity management can serve in bridging these gaps and optimizing the heterogeneity and homogeneity of a work society. Finland is not any

different than any other countries. It has growing number of diverse workforce. As a result, Finnish government has signed diversity charter to help companies maximize the benefits of diversity while different group of workers get fair recruitment and treatment at work places. (FIBS 2017)

This research based development project is aimed at finding out how diversity is being managed in an English kindergarten to keep the work consistent and up to standard. The International Childcare and Education Center (ICEC) is the work life partner for this thesis. The kindergarten has about eight branches in Helsinki, Espoo and Degerby (Inkoo). It was established in 1989 and has been expanding and growing until now. The kindergarten is multicultural in every way. It has a high prevalence of diverse workforce. The employees come from different countries, got their educational qualifications from various institutions in different countries. Their levels of English language vary from native speaker to being at different levels. The clients are also equally diverse except that there is still a dominant number of Finnish children with at least one of their parents being Fin. In addition, it is also an English kindergarten in Finland that follows the English curriculum of Early Years Foundation Stage(EYFS) which is birth to five years old and Key stage 1 which covers from five to seven years.

This thesis primarily focuses on how to maintain consistent teaching and care giving despite the diversity of the employees in I.C.E.C Play 'n' Learn kindergarten. The purpose of this research based development project is to improve work consistency in the case organization through the integration of diversity management.

The objective is to develop a tool that the management of the kindergarten can use for the introduction and inclusion of diversity management in their managerial system depending on the level of understanding and experience they have on the topic. The tool can be produced in different forms but with the aim of easy use and implementation. The tool also depends on how well diversity management has been used and implemented already in the company. This can help to shorten the

settlement period of new employees and smoothen the flow of work in general. In turn, it enhances the consistent delivery of service at higher standard level.

The main discussion describes the current state of diversity management and different perspectives and challenges. Based on the literature review, data collection was employed in the kindergarten. The data collection method was focus group discussion and it participated managers and sample employees at different time schedules. The participants have discussed the challenges and opportunities of having diversified workforce. The discussion was also aimed at finding out how diversity management is understood in the organization and how it has been implemented. The management team of the company has been kept up to date with the process of the project so that they can be part of the developmental work.

2 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH BASED DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

2.1 Organization

The International Childcare and Education Center (ICEC) is a non-profit making private company which aims at promoting early education and childcare for children under the age of seven. The International Childcare and Education Centre was started in 1989 under the original name of The International Playschool. As the company developed, a decision was taken to form a limited company and to change the name of the school. The decision to change the name was made to redefine the nature of the centers, and to better align itself with the changes in early years education being made in England. Now, it has eight different centers in the Helsinki metropolitan area and 1 in Degerby (Inkoo). (ICEC 2017) In one of the staff meetings that I recently participated in, a count was done and it was found that 36 different nationalities work together in all the branches. This high diversity was one of the main reasons why I chose the company to do the research based development project as it is relevant and advantageous. An agreement was signed between three parties: Lahti University of Applied Sciences, I.C.E.C Play 'n'Learn Oy and I as student/employee. The agreement was signed on November 1, 2016., according to the legal procedures of Lahti UAS.

The teaching approach combines both whole class teaching through which ideas are presented for all the children as a group and being discussed. The children have the freedom of discovering their environment and learn on their own. Play and curiosity are nature's way of helping children to understand their world. With guidance from a competent teacher (who presents the children with new concepts and ideas), an enriching environment (which reinforces these concepts, allows freedom to explore and encourages interaction), children will develop and learn. The International Childcare and Education Centre provides a safe environment, set out in many ways to provoke curiosity and surprise,

presenting children with the challenge and wonder of many different experiences. The aim is to foster a child's natural delight in exploration and discovery which results in her/him gaining knowledge and understanding. With an adult's support and guidance children can reach their full potential and become independent lifelong learners. The kindergarten follows the national curriculum of England. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the guide to the early learning goals. The objective is to ensure that by the time children transfer to compulsory education, they make good progress in all six areas of early learning within the early year's foundation stage and have reached some key stage 1 development areas. (same 2017)

All the staffs in ICEC kindergarten are either qualified or on NVQ (National Vocational Qualification of England) training. All new members of staff will undergo training as to what the system is and how it is implemented, within the first 4 months, whether they are qualified or not. During the four months trial period, new employees are closely supervised to ensure that they are suitable to work in the centers including their approach to the job, interaction with the children and trustworthiness in the environment. After the trial period, staffs that are not qualified will be put on NVQ training which could last 2-3 years in average. Besides, all staff members are encouraged to develop their professionalism throughout their career. There are opportunities to get trainings both within the company or access to training from outside. (same 2017)

2.2 Background

As a kindergarten teacher, I have had the chance to work with different colleagues from different backgrounds. I always wondered how some of our differences actually affect the way we do our job despite similar introduction and curriculums. Nevertheless, my simple curiosity grew bigger and stronger after I came across an article on diversity management when I was writing an essay for one of my courses. The article intensified my curiosity on diversity and consistency. Besides, the fact that I work for a company with multicultural employees tempted me to

look closer and study how diversity, diversity management and work consistency go along together. When I presented my idea to my tutor and later to my manager, they encouraged me to go further with it and supported me in my needs.

Louvrier (2013,95-96) and Sippola (2007,152) have both found in their researches that Finland is relatively new to the notion of diversity. The work life is still struggling between keeping the monolithic Finnish work culture and allowing diversity to bring changes. The government has done legislative changes towards anti discrimination, equality and fairness. Diversity charter has also been signed by number of organisations in recent years. However, there is a lot more to do in operational levels in order to maximize the benefits of diverse workforce.

In university of applied sciences, the aim of a thesis is producing an applicable outcome from investigation of developmental project. Unlike academic universities where hypothesis, research and result (investigation) are enough, in university of applied sciences a student or group of students are engaged in project based research where the end result is development. In research based project findings or results are used to create, develop or change a work system, service delivery, production or products in a real work life. (LAMK Master's thesis guidelines 2017)

This is research based developmental project carried out for ICEC learn'n' play Oy. This case study is a private English speaking kindergarten (ICEC) that operates in the Helsinki -Metropolitan region. The company is chosen because it is a company that is included under the social and health care service providers and it provides care and early childhood education for children. It is also non-profit making organization. In addition, it has multicultural staff, multicultural children and multicultural parents as clients. It is one of the few companies in Finland that has strong diversity in its employees. I also work for the company and when I chose it for this research project and shared the idea with my manager, she saw the relevance and the possible constructive outcomes. Thus, all the managers

were cooperative and supportive. In other words, the company's agreement to let me carry out my research is one of the reasons why it is my case study.

The aim was to find out how diversity management is embraced in the company and how that is affecting the work consistency from managers' and employees' point of view. I as a student/developer and employee of the company wanted to reach valid conclusion that enhances better work consistency and better service delivery. For that, accurate results lay the base.

2.3 Purpose and objective

Purpose

The purpose of this research based development project is to improve work consistency in the case organization through the integration of diversity management. In the big picture, the company is rich in diverse workforce that diversity management is an ideal management style to develop and improve consistent and high standard service provision in the kindergarten. After the completion of this development project, the purpose is that the company takes steps in including and implementing diversity management. The continuous integration and implementation of up to date diversity management strategies and operations can be the long run benefit for the company.

Objective

The objective is to develop a tool that the management of the kindergarten can use for the introduction and inclusion of diversity management in their managerial system depending on the level of understanding and experience they have on the topic. The tool can be produced in different forms but with the aim of easy use and implementation. The tool also depends on how well diversity management has been used and implemented already in the company.

Leading questions of the research based development project

According to Maxwell (2005,51), questions that are raised in a research or research based projects serve two vital functions. These are helping the researcher to focus on the relationship between the purpose and the conceptual context and to give guidance on how to conduct it. In this work, the literature review focuses on defining the terms diversity and diversity management in a daycare setting. The first two chapters discuss the meaning of the term diversity management, where and how it began up to its current application and early childhood education in Finland. It goes through the historical beginning and its advancement in the country. The leading question combines these two topics. The effects of diversity on job consistency in companies with diverse workforce; it seeks to answer how the embracement of diversity management can enhance consistency and better work environment. The International Childhood Education and Care Center (I.C.E.C) is the case study where data is collected in search of answers for the questions that are raised.

The following are the leading questions:

- 1.The views of managers at ICEC on the diversity of their team. The research seeks to answer if they believe that the diversity has affected the work consistency. It is also the aim of this study to find out what diversity management methods are implemented and have been helpful in their opinions.
- 2.The sample employees of ICEC were also asked basically similar questions. If they also believe that their diversity might affect their job consistency. Under same umbrella their expectations and thoughts are studied on what kind of support they expect from their managers to do their jobs better.
- 3.What are the common understandings of the managers and the employees? Do they share any meanings on what diversity is? How do they understand diversity management and its effect on the work environment?

The guiding points raised above were used to look through the current situation and find better tools that can be used in the case study company to enhance better work consistency and sustained quality of service through diversity management. Besides, the results that are found can shed some light on the topic in general for any further studies.

3 DIVERSITY AND DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

3.1 Diversity

Diversity can mean any mixture of items, objects or beings that share similarities and differences. For so long it has been believed that diversity is all about differences. However, diversity refers to mixture of similarities and differences among a certain dimension. Diversity is not about the majority or minority of items or people in a group but just the group itself being diverse and mixed. Diversity mixture can be people, concepts, abstracts or concrete items. The description of diversity can vary on race, gender, geographic origin, education, age and many others which refers to the mixture of people. In contrary, it can be the different professions included in a unit to represent abstract mixtures. According to Roosevelt (1996, 6), discussing diversity without specifying the dimension cannot take one any further in fruitful discussion.

The traditional definition of diversity is mainly based on gender and racial differences. Today, diversity could include but not limited to age, sexual preferences, and disabilities. It could also, in some instances, be defined by an individuals' different personal and corporate background, education, job function, position in the work place as management or non-management. Diversity does not only imply difference in people based on their identification with various groups, but it is also a process of acknowledging differences through actions. (Nunez and Florenez 2007, 51.)

A review of the business, organization and human resource literature produced three types of definitions of diversity. The first is the narrow category-based such as age, gender or ethnic background. The second category is broad base such as educational background and marital status. It is not an easy challenge to find one definition of workforce diversity that can be true all around the world. What is a disadvantage in some parts of the world can be a plus quality in others. It is also important to put in consideration that some of the differences that are important in

some countries do not exist at all in the others. However, scholars have been trying to find a definition that could be considered global. Workforce diversity refers to the division of the workforce into distinct categories that have a perceived commonality within a given cultural or national context, and that impact potentially harmful or beneficial employment outcomes such as job opportunities, treatment in the work place and promotion prospects irrespective of job-related skills and qualifications. (Barak 2005,55)

As it is shown in figure 1 below, Hofstede (2005,5) argues that a person can belong to a number of different groups and categories of people at the same time. As a result, a person can also carry many different mind programming corresponding to the different layers of groups that they person belongs to.

Hofstede's Layers of Culture	
Levels	Description
National	➤ Country of birth, development
Regional/and or ethnic	➤ Area of growth; religious and/or linguistic affiliation
Gender	➤ Born as a girl or boy
Generation	➤ Grandparents; parents; children
Social	➤ Occupation, profession, education
Organizational/ corporate	➤ Way employee socialized by work environment

FIGURE 1. Hofstede's layers of culture (Hofstede 2005, 5).

It is important to note that there is a fundamental difference between attributes that make a human unique human being and those that are

based on group membership rather than individual characteristics and yields negative or positive consequences. Workforce diversity is not about the anthropological differences between people that “make them special”. Diversity is about belonging to groups that are visibly or invisibly different from what is considered ‘mainstream in the society. In short, it is about being susceptible to employment consequences because of one’s association within or outside certain social groups. The third definition is based on conceptual rule such as variety of perspectives, differences in perceptions and actions. (Barak 2005,57-60)

3.2 Diversity management

The concept of diversity management was first introduced by Thomas Roosevelt who argued that diversity management can create an inclusive environment where differences can be managed properly and used to reach organizational goals. The inclusive environment let individuals be insiders while they still can keep their uniqueness. (Tanachia Ashikali and Sandra Groeneveld 2015, 758.)

Diversity management can refer to the legal or voluntary organizational actions that are designed to create greater inclusion of employees from various backgrounds into the formal and informal organizational structures through deliberate policies and programs. Cox (1994) as cited in Barak (2005, 55) indicates that the objectives of diversity management is to create organizations which members of all socio-cultural backgrounds can contribute and achieve their full potential. Diversity management refers not only to those groups that have been discriminated against or that are different from the dominant or privileged groups but to everyone in the organization.

Diversity management can be considered as a continuation of equal rights law, affirmative or positive action laws that aim at mainly correcting previous mistakes by mainly focusing on specific disadvantaged groups and work towards equity and equal opportunities. Diversity management differs from affirmative action approach that it mainly prioritizes the

company's or organization's benefits. The approach enhances equal opportunities to all the employees of company thus all become capable of contributing their best to the company's maximum benefit. In recent years two paradigms have been offered: the human resource paradigm and the multicultural organization paradigm. These two paradigms are the prominent paradigms that have been offered to diversity management to underscore its unique characteristics and purposes. The human resource paradigm works on the areas of diversity enlargement, diversity sensitivity and cultural audit. Companies become inclusive in their recruitment and hiring people of multicultural backgrounds. These companies expand their chances of benefiting from the diversity of skills and knowledge that their employees bring along with them. Companies also need to work on raising the awareness and sensitivity of their staff towards stereotyping and discrimination. At the same time, it promotes communication and collaboration. The other prominent paradigm is the multicultural organization which is still an ideal system that has not been reached by many organizations. The multicultural organization fosters and values cultural differences. In such companies, assimilation is not a desired result rather they favor pluralism. The employees are acculturated to stay unique and contribute their uniqueness to the company's benefit. (Barak 2005,)

In another article Roosevelt (2010,1-5) defines diversity management as the capability of making reasonable and quality decisions amid diversified groups, diverse settings and across different geographical locations. In same article, he condemns the idea of taking diversity management as local and international. He argues that there can be universal lens approach.

Sippola (2007,75) has classified diversity management paradigms in to four parts according to the human resource management changing responses towards diversity. The four pradigms include resistance, discrimination-and-fairness, access-and-legitimacy and learning-and-effectiveness. Companies with the resistance style act reactively both inpolicy and operational levels to maintain the status quo. According to

discrimination-and-fairness paradigms, companies are expected some formal policy base changes to encourage diversity to grow mainly in numbers. Organizations with access-and-legitimacy paradigms aim at gaining business benefits from diversity and react to it at operational level however they try to address it from an existing policy and system. The last paradigm in this category is the learning-and effectiveness. According to this paradigm, organizations react both strategically and operationally. The aim is to create value, practice and culture towards inclusiveness.

The notion of diversity management can also be put in an alternative term which has similar definition, cross cultural management. Cross-cultural management is concept of managing multiple cultures within and among organizations by putting knowledge transfer and organizational learning at core point. Here, the classical concept of culture as essence plays bigger role. For long time, cross-cultural management has focused on bringing everyone to one homogeneous culture as an essential organizational identity. That is why Bartholomew and Adler came up with the concept of collaborative cross-cultural learning. In this regard, the role of cross cultural management has been transferred towards facilitating, direct synergizing and learning at interfaces to transfer knowledge, values and experiences into multicultural domain of implementation. (Holden and Nigel 2002, 28.)

However, diversity management has also been criticized for being primarily supportive for minorities. This could still sustain unfairness in organizations thus majority of employees become dissatisfied. As a result, causing a negative social exchange effect where the employees feel less prioritized by the organizations and in turn will not strive much to give back. A study that was done in the Netherlands that aimed at finding out the responses of majority and minority groups, in the Dutch public service organizations, towards diversity management got generally positive results. The research looked through social exchange theory as its magnifying lens. In general, it was found that diversity management that was inclusive managed to attract all employees of majority and minority

backgrounds and affect them positively in terms of their commitment to the organization. (Ashikali and Groeneveld 2015, 758.)

3.3 Motives for utilizing diversity management

Cultural diversity is not something that is going to go away tomorrow so that we can easily assume a homogeneous society. However, it is a phenomenon by itself with its own riches that can benefit everyone if proper policies are made and actions are taken. People from different cultures share basic concepts but view them differently as there are clear trends, sequences and traditions in every culture and people behave accordingly. (Lewis 2006, 19.)

Linking the diversity of work teams to team performance has been the focus of number of different studies. As different studies have been done on the subject, different results have been obtained regarding the relationship between diversity and performance. Webbera and Donahue (2000) quoted that by using the theoretical argument of cognitive resource diversity, researchers in this area have argued that diversity in different demographic attributes is positively related with performance due to the increase in the cognitive resources offered to the. In contrary, Wiersema and Bantel (1992) found a negative relationship between diversity and performance. Ancona and Caldwell (1992) found no relationship between diversity and performance. One reason for these mixed findings is that different types of diversity may incur different types of impacts on the level of performance by the diverse work groups. The main argument is on how much the diversity is directly related and could affect the work. Studies have proved that it is difficult to take diversity as one full body and get similar results or impacts from it. Thus, it has been divided and detailed to make it easier to view the extent that diversity attributes are related to the group performance levels. Highly job-related diversity attributes have higher impact on the performance level compared to low job-related diversity attributes. It is also argued that the diversity attributes which are highly job-related, encompassing experiences and knowledge pertinent to

the task, will increase the underlying task-related skills needed for successful performance. In similar ways, the relatedness of such diversity can also be used in clear categorization of workers. However, low related attributes such as race, gender and age have very limited influence and cannot be used in categorization. This keeps them to be on the side unless they are raised in unnecessary situations. Relying on the theoretical underpinnings of both the trait and expectations models of diversity, it is hypothesized that highly job-related diversity has a stronger positive relationship with performance than less job-related diversity has. (Barak 2005,102)

The root concept in knowledge management is the belief that competitiveness in any business has dramatically changed from being natural resource based to being intellectual based. An inclusive definition for knowledge management can be the systematic and organized attempt to use knowledge in an organization to improve performance. The attempt of knowledge sharing becomes more challenging when it happens among diversity. The diversity could be in terms of language, cultural and ethnic background, gender or professional affiliation. Researchers have been taking different stands and approaches trying to describe the phenomenon and its challenges. The Swedish researcher Kleppesto put it in such a way that in diverse work environments the clashes that happen when knowledge is being transferred from one party to the other is not actually a clash but quest for social identity. He takes the social constructionist approach to explain his ideas. These parties take categories and argue and negotiate before the knowledge finds its space in a new environment through which they also make sense of it and create their shared view and social identities. (Holden 2002, 65-71.)

3.4 Diversity and diversity management in Finland

Since 2004, a diversity management charter has been established and signed across Europe to enhance the implementation and development of diversity management. The charter promotes diversity and equal

opportunities in the workplace regardless of age, disability, gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation. A report that is based on a survey from eleven countries has revealed that the diversity charter serves as a starting point to embark diversity management and develop more evolved strategies. Finland is one of the countries included in this survey. (Wondrak 2014, 6.)

In Finland, the main driving force behind diversity and equality matters has been the legislation than anything else. Because of such driving motive, goals were not met at satisfactory level. Some of these important acts include: Constitution of Finland (731/1999, renewed), Criminal law (39/1889, Employment Contracts Act (55/2001), Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/1986, 2005) and the Equality Act (21/2004). Despite the existence of such acts, inequality that is based on age, disability and ethnicity persisted. (Sippola 2007, 151.) On the other hand, Finland is amid two major changes regarding diversity. On one hand Finland is becoming international based on its relation to the rest of the world. This is mainly because of Finland's membership in the European Union and the worldwide globalization. On the other hand, Finland has been receiving increasing number of immigrants entering the country for different reasons. According to a research made between Finland and France, diversity is a recently happening and advancing situation in Finland. It has been viewed in different ways and thus the reaction also differs accordingly. In Finland, ethnic minorities have been explained through the theory of human capital and mostly they are viewed as deficient. The changes are not popularly perceived as positive. Prejudice and discrimination are prevalent among different levels. Managers, colleagues and clients reveal lack of trust and intolerance. (Louvrier, J. 2013, 90-110.)

The increased diversity within the workforce has demanded some managerial changes. One of the changes is a change in the recruitment process. The increase in the recruitment of foreign employees by itself is one of the major changes. This has demanded HR managers to learn and know more about legal issues in relation to work permits. As one manager

from an organization with diverse workers is quoted saying that now they are the professionals who can advise government officials on the issue. (Louvrier, J. 2013, 90-110.) However, it has been one of the interesting findings of researches being done in this area that other than changes in the recruitment process, not much has changed about the management of diverse workforce. According to Sippola (2007, 151), the complexity behind equality and diversity at organizations is partly caused by the culture of the organizations. Organizational culture in Finland is mainly built from monolithic strong national identity, homogeneity, social cohesion and self-consciousness. In some day to day life situations, organizations have been cooperating in making work shifts according to the interest of ethnic minorities such as their religious holidays and other important days that are not remarkable in the Finnish calendars. There has also been attitude shaping done to lessen the effects of prejudice and discrimination. (Louvrier 2013,90-110)

Furthermore, Finland has also signed a diversity charter in 2012. The charter was launched in Helsinki on October 3, 2012. It was signed by 18 companies and organizations with the aim of promoting competitive advantage from diversity in member organizations. Currently there are almost 300 member companies, NGOs, universities and other organizations. (FIBS 2017) The charter is run by FIBS which is the leading corporate responsibility network. (Diversity Charter Finland 2012.) Finnish government has also launched a strategy in 2013 which aims at paving the way for active and forward-looking immigration policy. The strategy is formulated based on the ongoing fact that migration is here and can be anticipated as the future of our society. Social policy makers, politicians and researchers have participated in the launch to ensure the proper integration and settlement of immigrants. It also includes principles which mainly revolve around equal opportunity for all and elimination of prejudice. (Ministry of the Interior 2013, 3) A report that reviewed the impacts of diversity management implementation among member countries in Europe that have signed the diversity charter that is drafted and funded by the European Union has been released. According to the

report, the focus in the Finnish companies that is given to diversity is mainly based on disability. Ethnic minorities have only got 15% coverage which shows less priority compared to other countries such as Sweden which gave 100%. As elsewhere in Europe, sexual orientation and gender identity are given less attention. According to this report, the member companies have benefited from the charter and have shown better integration of diversity management. (Wandrak 2014, 20)

In general, diversity and difference are mainly focused on immigrants and minorities than any other differences such as gender or age. Most of the diversity management steps that have been taken are from stands of monoculture, homogeneous Finnish society. The work is done mainly to close the gaps by bringing immigrants to the knowledge of Finnish work life. The majority Finnish employees are also informed about immigrant workers from the focus point that they lack information and experience. (Louvrier, J. 2013, 90-110) In this regard, companies that have signed up the charter have shown improvements in bringing respectful behavioral patterns. They have also achieved a certain level of creativity from the diverse work force, better working condition and the integration of diversity in the corporate social policy of the companies. (Wandrak 2014, 20.)

4 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

4.1 The history of early childhood education and care

Early childhood education has a history of more than 200 years. In many parts of the world early childhood education came with the development and expansion of Industrial revolution. The revolution has introduced new machineries but at the same time longer hours of work and the usage of women and child labor. Among the social reformers who began to express their concern, Robert Owen who was a mill owner and social reformer brought in changes in policies and practices to make the lives of families and children better. He established the Institute for the Formation of Character in New Lanark, Scotland in 1816. There are basically two types of child cares. These are center-based care centers and family daycares. Day care commonly refers to an out of home program and facility serving children who need care for a greater portion of the day. Family day care is defined as a nonresidential care provided in a private home other than the child's own. (Decker, Celia A and John R. Decker 2005, 6.)

Early childhood education in Finland has a long history. The founder of Finnish public education Uno Cygnaeus was the first to be interested in Froebelian ideas for young children's education. While developing his ideas for public education in Finland, he visited Germany in the mid-nineteenth. Froebelian kindergartens influenced him strongly so that, in 1863, he established the first crèche (for Cygnaeus four year – eight year old) and kindergarten for four to ten year old children at the beginning of his time at the teacher training school in Finland that was in Jyväskylä. Gradually in 1916, the state granted subsidies for kindergartens for the very first time. Since 1917, budget for kindergarten activities was granted regularly. Municipal kindergartens only started in 1919. When the act was passed in 1927 on State Subsidies for kindergarten, municipalities started to take all the responsibility for kindergarten. Daycare was the new name given to kindergarten which was a place to perform social and educational services. Daycare started to become defined as supporting the home in its

upbringing task and no longer connected only with child protection and the poor. It was also established as a social service to all families and an educational service to all under school aged children. (Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland 2000,19.)

4.2 Managing early childhood care and education programs

Management skills are necessary for program survival. It is the technical part of administration that is responsible in the execution of the program. Effective time management and prioritizing among activities by investing time on the most important and productive activities are few of the qualities for a good manager. It is difficult to categorize early childhood teachers as competent and incompetent as the term itself is ambiguous in this specific case. These professionals are at different levels in their careers and continuous development is an important part of it. According to Kath and Rath, the early childhood personnel just like other professionals differ widely in their educational backgrounds and are at different stages in their careers. This leads them in having different needs and they seek for different support from their managers. Good leaders are the ones who can assess both collective and individual needs of staff members if they hope to improve the quality of the program. (Saracho 2005, 356.)

Collective needs are those that all the employees in early childhood care and education centers share. It is not possible to create a team unless all the group members have shared visions and goals. Employees need orientation and common understanding of the rationale of the program base and the objectives stemming from the rationale, clients they serve, the services of the program, the physical facility and regulations and local program policies. Equivalent to collective needs, individual needs are also important that need to be identified and addressed in a proper manner. Each staff members are unique individuals at different stages of development with different abilities and teaching styles. For example, Katz identified four different professional development stages. These are: the first year known as survival stage, the second and third year in which

teachers consolidate on gains and want to focus on some skills which is known as consolidation. Renewal is the third stage which is between third and fourth year of career when job stress is alleviated through assistance. The fourth stage is called maturity which usually comes after the fifth year when teachers benefit from additional formal education or professional conferences and contributions to the profession. (Saracho 2005,357)

Improvement of quality of the staff should be planned and implemented by the manager or the leader. Development activities mainly include active learning, reflective practice and individualized activities. (Ceccilia and John 2005, 118)

4.3 Daycare management in Finland

Daily management is typical term for Finnish leadership concept that refers to secretarial tasks that deal mainly with recruitment of subsistence staff, taking care of maintenance and minor shopping and the like. (Nivala, 1999 according to Hujala, Waniganayake & Rodd 2013, 223). In Finland, the early childhood education and care has two aims which are caring for under school age children and teaching them. In other words, it provides child care for families who need help in looking after their children during their working hours and education for the children who are under care. The leadership responsibility in daycare centers cannot be detached from these main aims. Every child has a subjective right to get early education regardless of the parents' employment status. Municipalities are the responsible bodies that organize the early childhood education and care. It is mainly fulltime and provided by municipal daycares. There are also other forms of daycares such as part-time daycares and family daycares. Private daycares also provide the service. (Hujala, Waniganayake & Rodd 2013, 224-226)

Child care is regulated by legislation under the Act of Children's Day Care (36/1973), Decree of Children's Day Care (239/1973) and steered by the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care. Qualifications and requirements for the professionals working in the area

including the ones on the leadership position are defined by Act on Qualification Requirements for Welfare Professionals (272/2005). Accordingly, center managers need to be qualified EC (Early Childhood) teachers with adequate management skills and higher university degree is needed for administrative ECE (Early Childhood Education) leaders. In general, the responsibilities are mainly related to pedagogical leadership and human resource management. (Legislation on Early Childhood Education and Care 2017)

4.4 ICEC Play'n'Learn kindergarten

The kindergarten has a policy file that is accessible for parents if they want to have a look. The policy is mainly about the safety and wellbeing of the children while they are cared for and thought at the kindergarten. It also includes professional ethical boundaries that are expected by the staff. It describes the curriculum and its implementation. It describes how behavior is managed and the knowledge of routines is implanted from the early age in children without taking away their freedom of discovering and learning. Health and safety, hygiene, medication and illness are all put clearly so that the staff know what to do. The school has strict policy on who picks up a child and under what circumstances. It is clearly mentioned on the policy that there is equal opportunity for children of different backgrounds and there is no discrimination in admission. Animals are an integrated part of the curriculum and are vital. The children experience the presence of animals in their daycares, get the opportunity to take care of the animals and play with them. Each branch has its own pet besides the visit they make to pet park at least once in a year. This summarizes the content of the policies regarding children under care. The policies in relation to workers mainly focus on ethics, dressing codes and other inappropriate habits that are unacceptable by the company. (I.C.E.C policy 2017)

One day that is just normal day contains a certain number of routines which more or less are similar every day. The morning begins with greeting and welcoming parents who come to drop their children and kids

who are going to spend their day in the kindergarten. A friendly approach is vital in order to invite the kids inside without any fear and let parents go with their full trust on the staff. Soon after, breakfast is served. The breakfast usually lasts about 45 minutes. The children are encouraged to eat especially if they have not eaten at their homes. Once breakfast is over the formal day starts by a morning circle. In morning circles, children get to say their names and discuss other things like what they did over the weekend or how the weather looks like. Circle time plays an important role in building kids' confidence and supporting their social and emotional developments. At the end of circle time children get to choose where to go and play or what kind of activity that they want to do. During this play/learn times, the children might have questions or need support of adults at different levels. It is also important to keep balance of how much time is spent with one or group of children compared to other children. By the end these morning activities, adults and children sing the 'tidy up' song which signifies the end of play time. The children put all the toys they played with away with the help of adults. After discussing what they did in the morning, they go to the dressing room to get ready and go outside in the park. The outside play is another important factor in the children's physical, mental and emotional development. Adults also have important role that extends from planning to implementing and evaluating outdoor activities. Weather is also something to consider as different weather tolerance is present among different countries and cultures when it comes to sending children out to play. By the end of the park time, it is nearly mid-day and children are ready to have lunch. They come inside, get undressed, wash their hands and sit for a story time while waiting for their lunch to be ready. They have the choice of bringing lunch from home or eat caterer lunch. After lunch, the children go straight to their beds to take their nap or have a relaxation time depending on their ages. When they wake up the day restart in a similar way by having afternoon circle and choosing their plays and activities. It is important to mention that in this big picture of routines some vary according to the age differences of the children such as changing diapers at regular intervals or reminding and taking them to toilet if they are not completely independent in toilet use. (ICEC 2017)

The discussion on consistency despite diversity is about all these routines and details. How diversity can affect the consistency of work and how management can insure standard similarity amid diversity of employees. Different traits of diversity can affect people working in the company differently. It can affect them in many ways such as expectations from children, level of support they provide, communication and interaction, behavior management and so on.

5 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY

5.1 Qualitative social research

Qualitative research focuses on qualities of a process or entity and meanings that cannot be examined through experiments or be measured in terms of quantity, amount or frequency. (Haber J. and LoBiondo-Wood G. 2006, 131.) Qualitative research is deeply involved and has become routine in our daily lives. Whenever we observe or participate in social behavior and try to understand it or tell our observations to others, we are doing qualitative field research (Babie 2007, 286). Qualitative research is mainly about studying people in their natural living environment or situations. Some of the common research paradigms that are employed to carry out research include naturalism, ethnomethodology, ground theory, phenomenology and case studies. Qualitative research can also use different methods such as interview, focus groups and observations. The common feature of all these different methods is that they use text rather than numbers. Qualitative interview is one of the methods that is believed to be useful and informative. Researchers proved it be helpful in finding out detailed and extended ideas and responses from informants. The interview structures are usually flexible, interactive and continuous unlike interviews of quantitative research which are prepared in advance and locked in stone. Focus groups are group of people typically 6-10. Usually this people are not selected through rigorous, probability sampling. They are group of people who know well the topic under study and can discuss on the topic given to them. It is sometimes called group interviewing that is based on structured, semi-structured or unstructured interview. Recording observation is one of the especial advantage of field research as it lets the researcher think and capture happenings on the scene of the action. (Babie 2007, 305-313; Judith and Geri 2006, 132)

As all other methods, qualitative research has its own strong and weak sides. The strengths include the fact that it enables the study of attitudes, behaviors and changes in social process. Qualitative field research is

better informative and easier to be there physically and observe occurrences than trying to reconstruct events. It is also flexible as it is possible to engage in observation whenever the situation lets unlike surveys or experiment. This lets researchers go directly to the social phenomenon under study and observe it fully in order to get complete picture of it. Besides, it is less expensive compared to other methods. The weakness is mainly that results are usually qualitative and not quantified which makes it difficult to integrate them in statistical descriptions of a large population. (Babie 2007, 287-313)

I chose qualitative research method as it enables one to collect ideas and reflections that are otherwise impossible to understand in numerical terms. Interests of the study is mainly to overlook the implementation of diversity management in the case company therefore qualitative research method is the best method to study the management process. According to Catherine and Gretchen (1989, 46), qualitative studies are exceptionally valuable in specific types of researches. Among their lists, lies research on informal and unstructured linkages and process in organizations. The main research guiding point in this work is to study how diversity management can help to improve consistency. As a result, this method has been chosen for use.

5.2 Data collection methods

Case study

The simplest definition of case study can be the study of a thing, single entity or a unit that has a surrounding fence to mark its limits (Merriam 1998, 27). Case studies are vastly used in organizational studies in the fields of social science disciplines of sociology, industrial relations and anthropology. They are theoretically exciting and come with satisfactory data. (Hartley 1994, 208.) Case studies are usually aimed at examining and retaining contemporary, currently on going, holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life situations. (Mesta-Ketelä 2010, 53; Yin 2003, 2). In other words, case study allows a researcher to carry out a study at the

time of the happening in its natural environment. In case study data can be collected in different ways while respondents interact and do what they do in social situation which is under investigation. That makes it unique and different from other forms of data collection methods that allow to meet respondents only outside of their social or physical environment which is also part of the study. The research consists of detailed investigation that could be reached through data collected over a period of time from one or few chosen organizations. It is not merely a method but rather a research strategy. As a strategy, it could include different methods both from qualitative and quantitative methods though mostly qualitative method that is used. However, case studies are not defined by the methods they use but the theories that they are oriented to. Theoretical frame works can serve as initials of a research or the studies can lead to emerging theories. Either cases, theories are pillars of case studies. (Hartley 1994, 210)

Case studies can be chosen as method of study if the question of the study is an explanatory type such as "why" or "how". These questions cannot be answered easily in numbers through survey strategies or the analysis of archival records. As this research based development project seeks to find out how diversity management supports work consistency, case study was found to be the most convenient method for the project. A case study can include two sources of evidences which are direct observation and interviews of persons involved in the events. I was able to choose the case study as I am staff of the company and can witness the diversity it embraces. In the process of the project, all the policies and other recordings of the company that I was allowed to access and use for the purpose of this study were my direct observations of the company or the case study. The other source of evidence was the focus group discussion that I had with two sample groups. (Yin 2003, 12). In clear terms, the case study in this research based project was an English-speaking kindergarten at which all the data collections have been done. The extent of the findings and recommendations are mainly for the case study unless it is mentioned.

Focus group discussion

The data is mainly collected through focus group discussion eventhough other methods such as e-mail and workshops have been planned to be used or been used. Focus group discussion as the name suggests is different from an in-depth interview. Powell (1996, 499) defined it as a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research. In focus group discussion, the group aspect is the most important feature. Data is not mainly generated as collection of interview responses from each individuals in the group. In other words, the interaction between the researcher and the respondents is not the main means of data generation. The group discussion is vital. The people in the group discuss, ask questions or seek clarification from each other. The discussion progresses backwards and forwards or goes around. This way people learn from each other, get deeper insight of the topic and share their views accordingly. Besides, focus group discussion has this spontaneity. When people are in social context and discuss their views, it is possible that they talk about things that they give stronger emphasis and reveal their form of reference on the subject of the study. The influence of the researcher is less as it could have been with in-depth interview. Nonetheless, the researcher has undeniable role in ensuring that everyone has their say both as a group and as individuals. It is also the researcher's role to make sure the research issues are covered and the discussion stays on track. In focus group discussion, the practical arrangements are also vital. It is important to carefully plan the time of the discussion, choose the venue, arrange the lay out of the room and prepare and assure the quality of the recording equipments beforehand. (Ritchie and Lewis 2004, 170-197.)

Workshop

Learning can happen in many different training forums. Some happen as one-to-one while others happen in small group. Some learning forums can be online while others happen face-to-face. In all of these, the common happening is a learning experience. (Biech 2005, 8.)

In a generalized definition, a workshop is a single and relatively short educational session that is aimed at teaching participants knowledge or skill that they can apply in their work or their daily lives. Workshops are usually short and time limited. They can range from 45 minutes to a day or even few days. In workshop both presenter and participants can say their opinions so it is rather participatory. The target groups are usually people of same profession or same interest and the presenters need to have real experience on the subject they are presenting. (Conducting a workshop 2017.)

One of the advantages of a workshop is that it is exceptionally useful to introduce a method or knowledge for the first time. People tend to remember experience more than what they read. However, experience is not the only most successful way. Reflection and generalization can make a learning experience most effective and complete. Learning new idea or skill can be just one-time experience that could easily been forgotten unless it is followed by reflections and generalizations. (Facilitating workshops 2012, 3.) However, workshops or any other form of training are not as successful as they could be unless they are designed based on needs. Assessment of needs is crucial to determine current and desired performance. The training is the one that can fill the gap between current situation and the desired performance. Different data collection methods can be used as a tool for assessment. (Biech 2005,51-52.)

The overall results show that the subject is pretty new for the company's management team. Most of the findings were derived from answers that were collected from indirect questions as diversity management as a concept and as an independent management style was not familiar to the managers. ICEC kindergarten is one of the few companies in Finland that has such a truly diverse workforce under it. It is also one of the prior companies to take the step in hiring people that are from varied backgrounds. Currently, it is one of the biggest and oldest private daycares in Helsinki metropolitan area that is also known for its quality service delivery. The proper introduction and exploitation of the concept of diversity management will add up to the already existing success of the

company. It will also help the company in keeping its pioneer position by taking steps for the future of diversity, diverse workforce and diversity management in the social service fields in Finland and in Europe in general.

The third data collection method is exchanging information via e-mail. The e-mail is easy, time saving and yet effective way of collecting simple responses that do not need much space or time. It was used to inform the managers the overall findings of the two discussions and to request for their recommendations in the development of further tool.

5.3 Data analysis method

Qualitatively collected data is highly intertwined with theory base thus it is very difficult to analyze without linking it to a theory. In addition to theory linkage, it is vital to discover and follow patterns unless the qualitative data collection is done for a purely descriptive purpose such as the case of anthropological study of community for the first time. There are six important questions that can help follow pattern. These are frequency, magnitudes, structures, process, cause and consequences. Patterns will help to find vast area of the data being analyzed and happenings that often appear. (Babie, E. 2007, 378-9.) That is why data analysis is the most exciting and challenging stage of the process (Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor 2003, 199). Besides, data analysis is the stage that clearly distinguishes qualitative method from experimental or survey researches (Maxwell 2005, 78).

I have found the analytic hierarchy or thematic analysis method to be clear to understand and easy to use method. This analysis method enables the identifying, analysing, and reporting of patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes data set in rich detail. However, it extends to the interpretation of various aspects of a research topic. (Clarke and Braun 2006, 77.) Thus, I have decided to use it as my way of data analysis for this thesis. It has three main stages which are data management, descriptive accounts and explanatory accounts. They have

more than one sub divisions under each of them. The name hierarchy does not necessarily imply that it is linear. The movement could be both up and down wards. (Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor, 2004, 213.)

The first of these is data management. At the beginning, any researcher is faced with a mass of tangled data. It involves the generation of themes and concepts according to which the data can further be sorted, labelled and compared. (Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor 2004, 213.)

Data management is primary task of identifying initial themes or concepts. The selection is mainly based on recurrence of the themes. The researcher needs to identify recurring themes or ideas. Once they have been noted, the following step is to produce a conceptual framework or index. Index is like coding which is an important step in mostly used qualitative data analysis methods. However, indexing and coding are not exactly the same. Indexing is choosing labels and putting sub topics underneath to make list of all highly interweaving concepts and where they belong unlike coding which usually puts together concepts and dimensions that have already been defined. Once the indexes are made, the next steps are labelling or tagging and summarizing and synthesizing. The labelling is done basically by putting the concepts under the index made in order to see which belongs where. The final stage in data management is summarization. The main target at this stage is shortening the data to manageable size. However, phrases and expressions should be maintained as much as possible and interpretation should be kept at the minimum level. It is advisable to keep the original materials as checking and double checking will be needed throughout the process. The very last task is the formation of the thematic chart. Thematic chart is a process of summarizing key points of each data collected while it still retains the actual content or context used by the respondents. (same 2004, 219-237)

Descriptive account is mainly unpacking the content of the data. For that purpose, three stages are followed; detection, categorization and classification. It begins with looking within themes across all cases of the study and find out perceptions, experiences, behaviors and views. It is

also the interest of this stage to see which elements appear often and which are barely mentioned twice. The researcher then sets for key dimensions, broader and refined categories to find out the themes they incorporate and discriminate within the data. Then, the researcher assign labels to the data that has been shifted beyond the original text. The data is now interpreted in a more conceptual way. In other words, some lists such as feelings, behaviors, circumstances and norms or other forms of social phenomenon that belong together are given a common title to be put under its subcategory. This is called classification; the other key step of descriptive account. Classification can also be done in different stages; ranking from less abstract to highly abstract classifications and assignments. The third important step is categorization. In the process of categorization, the main task is making sure that all cases are included and all elements of relevance are incorporated. It is also one of the most important duties of the researcher to make sure that the categorizations and the classifications developed are conceptually coherent. (Spencer et al. 2004, 237-248)

Explanatory accounts are all about detecting patterns, associative analysis and identification of clusters. It looks for linkages between phenomenon or attachments to subgroups or both. Search for explanation is a demanding job as it involves reading through the synthesized data, following leads, studying patterns, sometimes re-reading full transcripts. There is usually a need to go back and forth until pieces come together to give meaningful picture. These principles are applicable to all forms of qualitative data analysis concerned with interpreting meaning. Moreover, some considerations need to be taken when data have been collected through group discussions rather than individual interviews. Group data analysis has two different approaches or ways of analysis; whole group analysis and participant based group analysis. In whole group analysis, the group is the unit of analysis as such it is unit of individual data where as in participant based group analysis contributions of individual participants are separately analyzed within the context of the discussion. In general, explanatory accounts are developed at the later or higher stages of

analysis. They may be driven from finding patterns and explaining why. Explanations can also involve the application of explicit reasons and accounts, inferring an underlying logic, using 'common sense', drawing on other empirical studies, developing explanatory concepts or using theoretical framework. In chapter 4, it is explained how some of these techniques have been used in the implementation of the data analysis process of this research based development project. (Spencer et al. 2004, 248-261.)

6 DEVELOPMENT WORK IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Data collection method

Qualitative research method has been chosen for this project based thesis work and data was collected through focus group discussion. Focus group is one of the qualitative research methods that has gained an increasing popularity in the past couple of decades. The unique feature of focus group that separates it from an in-depth interview is that it generates data through interaction and discussion. In focus group, participants present their views and they get to listen and reflect on others' opinions. They can ask questions from each other, seek clarification and at times debate. Thus, deeper information can be gained and bigger data can be generated. (Finch and Lewis 2003, 171) For these features, I chose focus group discussion as data collection method. As Finch and Lewis (2003,173) emphasized, a certain heterogeneity in the group can facilitate discussions. However, people feel safer and relaxed when they are among people who share similar views as they hold. I chose to have two groups; a group of managers and a group of employees separately. The managers of the company were the main participants. The focus of the thesis is on diversity management thus managers and their views and understandings of diversity management, how they practice it in their branches were vital. Four managers out of seven were available to participate in the focus group discussion. These managers represented four different branches. They are all Europeans and had work experience varying from 3- 20 years. Below shows the small picture of diversity that the managers work with.

It was believed that the views of the managers need to be supported by the views of the employees to make sure that the results are valid and concrete. A sample group of the employees also participated in the data collection process. The topics of the discussions with both groups were mainly similar. The discussion questions are attached in appendix one and two. The central line in both cases has been their views on diversity management and work consistency. In addition, the managers discussed the methods they use and how they have been working whereas the employees talked about their experiences and shared their expectations from their managers.

TABLE 1. Managers and the number of different nationalities working with them.

Name codesof managers	Number of foreign staffs with different nationalities working with them
1	11
2	21
3	7
4	3

The employees are also diverse who came from different countries and continents. Their years of experience also vary from one to the other. The longest working sample employee is 12 years while the shortest is 3 years. Some of them have earned their diplomas in Finland and the others got it abroad. They all have qualifications that are recognized by the Ministry of Education of Finland.

The first discussion was with the managers. After date and place of the discussion has been decided, I sent the main literature reviews I used in this thesis to all the participants so that they can familiarize themselves with the main topic diversity management. The discussion was carried out in total with five people including me as discussion facilitator. It was on 16.12.2016 at the Töölö I.C.E.C branch. The managers chose to have the discussion at the end of the working hours so we met at 4:00 pm. A round table setting was arranged to keep eye contact and easy chat among all participants. I took snack with me so I set the table with some fruits and crunchy snacks, plates and cups. They were happy and that made the beginning easy. They thanked me for the thought of bringing them snack. The discussion did not begin directly from the main topic rather from easy chats such as "pass me the cups" or "I like the cheese". It made a smooth transition to begin the main discussion. After acquiring their consent, I used my phone for recording the discussion. They agreed that I can record the discussion as long as I do not pass it to anyone else. Nine questions were used to direct, initiate and facilitate the discussion which is attached at the end as appendix 1. The group discussion lasted for one hour and fifteen minutes. The participants were very cooperative and shared their experiences and gave their ideas with full heart. Even though they were taking turns, it was also a very good discussion in that sense that they were adding points to what the other said or interrupting one's speech in a good way just to remind a point or strengthen what is being said. Very good examples from personal experiences were raised throughout the discussion time. The participants had a lot to say for some of the questions while for few questions they had very limited answers. In that way, the length of time spent on different questions was noticeably different. From my point of view, the main reason for that was lack of knowledge or the fact that they have not thought about some of the points under discussion as important and relevant part of their jobs before. The discussion ended the way it began that participants were happy and appreciative of the topics that they just discussed.

Following the discussion, I wrote down the direct discussion that was recorded word by word. The transcription resulted in to 11 pages. It was written with font style Times New Roman, font size 12 and line spacing 1.5. I semi-analyzed the collected data before calling the sample employees group to another focus group discussion.

The leading questions in the second discussion were polished with the overall outcomes of the previous one which are found attached at the end as appendix 2. Then the second discussion followed on 24.02.2017. In the second discussion 8 questions were used. The discussion with the employees was also led by questions that revolve around same topic of diversity, diversity management and work consistency. It was held in Meilahti branch where I work. There were four participants in the discussion and I was the fifth one as the discussion facilitator. I personally expected that the discussion with my colleagues would be easier however the beginning was not as easy as I expected it to be. They were not sure if they should follow formal procedures or be informal and give their ideas in a relatively easy way. They were also not sure if the voice recorder would cause any unnecessary problem in the future. I had to make everything clear that the voice recorder is only for me to make sure that I remember all the points of our discussion and no one else is going to listen to it. I also had to assure them that there is no formality to be followed and we can just have free discussion to address the questions and produce relevant answers as much as possible. Once the discussion started, they seem to forget all about the recorder and the other uneasy feelings. It was very relaxed, fruitful and elaborated discussion that we had.

From the second discussion, I transcribed 8 pages with font style Times New Roman, font size 12 and line spacing 1.5. In both discussions, the data generated was satisfactory that there was no need of collecting further data in a different method or from different groups.

After the data obtained through the above mentioned focus group discussions was analysed, the findings were used for further data collection. The aim at this stage was to include the views of the managers

for any further developmental work. A group e-mail was sent to all the managers who participated in the focus group discussion to let them know the results obtained and invite them contribute an input for the next step in the developmental project. The e-mail mainly shows the core findings and invites managers to comment what they would like to recommend for the future development. However, the response was not fruitful according to the plan. They preferred to refrain from making comments or recommendations. My tutor manager from the work place told me in a short face-to-face discussion that it is better if I develop any tool and reach conclusion on my own.

At this stage, I prepared my third data collection/training forum which is workshop. This method has only been planned and is attached in the appendix 3 but has never had the chance to be implemented.

6.2 Data analysis method

After the data has been collected through two focus group discussions, the raw data was around 19 pages of the exact words that were used by the participants. It was huge, wide and challenging as where to start to put it in some order. I carried out the data management manually and I used the hierarchy analysis method for the data analysis. The first stage of bringing these responses into shorter and more refined version was done through table. I will put here how some of the responses have been shortened in to thematic chart. Here are some examples:

This was one of the managers' answers to the question how they would describe being a manager at a daycare (Discussion questions attached as appendix 1)

N1. Very hard work, very rewarding incredibly, challenging but filled with joy and wonder and frustrations at times.

N2. Challenging , hard work again one of the best jobs. One of the best jobs I ever had...you make difference in children's lives, staff members' lives, when they go home I feel very happy with what I achieved throughout the day. Of course

everyone has good and bad days but I am like hang on...we have achieved all these things.

N3. Challenging and at times incredibly frustrating but as no1 said rewarding and privileged to be able to work with so many staffs and families. And to meet so many different types of people and to notice you actually get along with all. Making a difference to parents and families.

All Ns joined to discuss how one also makes difference in the lives of staffs as well and see them grow and find their callings in the profession and learn that is actually what they want to do.

N4. There is no boring day. Yesterday is not same as today. You don't know in the morning what is going to be in your to do list for the day.

N2 It can also be stressful as you are responsible for the safety.

The above direct answers of the managers were shortened and refined. The thematic chart helps to save all the main descriptive words and phrases by getting rid of less important adjectives or repetitive words.

TABLE 2. Example of a thematic chart from Managers' response

Concept	Manager 1	Manager 2	Manager 3	Manager 4	Summary
How do you describe being a manager at a daycare ?	Hard work, challenging, rewarding, frustrating, filled with joy, demanding to be a quick decision maker	Challenging, hard work, one of the best jobs, good and bad days, stressful because of the responsibility	Frustrating, rewarding, privilege to work with different people, making difference	Challenging, very hard, rewarding, every day is new, see changes in staff and children, Flexibility	Hard work, challenging, frustrating. It is also rewarding, one of the best jobs, opportunity to work with different people, all days are different. Demands quick decision making and flexibility

Another example of thematic chart is taken from the responses of the employees group. The following is their direct word of mouth for the question how they remember the first few weeks after they have been hired by the company.

A. It was difficult in the beginning but I settled, got used to everything, name of the kids and getting to know parents. The colleagues were nice people and that helped me to settle in the work situation specially the manager helped me.

B. I came at the end of March, CTA(curriculum through art) time, so it was chaotic. The first couple of weeks, it was more learning the names and getting used to the environment. The teachers were busy with the art work so I was more with the kids but it was not so much productive. The manager was on school room side so she did not come to help me much. She then came and did evaluation with the supervisor and the outcome was positive. I started to do paper works and more regular teaching in August after the summer holidays.

D. It was a lot of information and the whole system was new.

C. It has been messy for long time. I came from the Finnish system. I started in August, the amount of work was overwhelming and there was no clear introduction. It started to get clear after January. It was unclear, nobody taught me how to fill the papers, such as planning papers. They were just handed to me and I was told here you go fill them.

D. got an explanation "I think I know why the introduction was not clear." At the beginning noC was assistant teacher, the manager invested all the information on the key teacher. However, later both assistant and key teacher were expected to do the paper work. Lack of planning time. You were expected to plan without anytime. We were not taught the system, That lacked.

C. I had to sometimes skip my lunch break just to plan activities.

Table 3 below is another good example of how their direct words have been analyzed as a first step through thematic chart.

Table 3. Example of thematic chart from employees' response

Concept	Employee A	Employee B	Employee C	Employee D
Few weeks just after being hired in the company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Difficult . Getting used to kids and parents . Nice colleagues . Helpful manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Came at very busy time (March) . Other teachers were busy, I was left to be with the kids . Manager was in a different building and not much help . Assumed full teacher's responsibility later 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Came from a different system . My beginning was messy for a long time . Huge amount of work . Unclear introduction . Was given tasks without proper introduction . used own bread for planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . New system . Lot of information . No clear introduction to the system . Tasks without planning time

I drove all the basic concepts and themes from each question. The questions were formulated in a way that each question addresses a certain theme or concept. That made the first stage of thematizing and the production of the thematic chart easier.

The second stage in the analytic hierarchy was the descriptive accounts. This is a stage of unpacking the concept or nature of a phenomenon. The three key steps in doing so are detection, categorization and classification.

At this stage I have done the analysis in two phases. In the first one, I have chosen to do a group analysis both to the managers' responses and the employees' responses. Yet, I have not categorized the responses from these two groups under common themes. This is because the thematic chart is very general that the combination of the two groups' responses at an early stage can risk many valuable themes and concepts to be passed unseen.

Below is an example of how the managers described being a manager of a day care. They used many words to describe their understanding of the job and their feelings attached to it. Based on that and the frequency of some of the themes, I classified it in two three main topics and put the descriptions beside. These descriptions are moderately analyzed and transformed from original words and phrases of the respondents.

Managing a daycare (Managers)

Demanding- is the key word that all the managers used. It is very hard, stressful and frustrating job for so many reasons. All the managers agreed that the job is very demanding and challenging. It is hard work, frustrating and stressful.

Rewarding- However, it is also rewarding and is an opportunity to work with different kinds of people.

Unpredictable -The job demands flexibility and quick decision making as there are always surprises in the morning or in other words it is hard to predict how a day will divert from the schedule. At the same time it is never boring as the days are not always the same

Another similar example is below. It is again taken from managers' response of what they think is challenge of managing diverse workforce:

Challenges of managing diverse workforce (Managers)

Time management - It has been raised with all the managers. Misuse of time such as in the beginning of work, coming late especially without informing the possibility of coming late. They all believed that time management has a lot to do with the cultural backgrounds of their employees.

Gender bias - In some cultures, it is very difficult to view women as bosses. People of some backgrounds might find it challenging to accept and work harmoniously.

Views towards managers - Other important factor is how managers are viewed in different cultures. In some, they are considered absolute and unquestionable. Their words are taken without questioning and turned in to actions. This can also cause imperfection in the working relationship. One manager suggested that power should be balanced and employees need to be empowered to question and say their minds.

Interactions /personalities - At times being from same country cannot grant smooth interaction and working relation within people. Personality can play a great role as well. One manager brought an example of one of her employees from the previous years. That lady resigned because she could not cope with the loud and chatty nature of her manager.

Language - It is another important factor that matters in the management of diverse workforce. The work team is built up from all nations and nationalities. Some are native speakers while others have English as their second language. The levels of their learned English can also vary accordingly. There is also a high influence of their native language on those who speak English as their second language.

Expressions, polite ways of saying things, spellings and grammars can bring tensions and misunderstandings among people working together. Managers need to be aware of that and at times use it to help their employees negotiate and resolve conflicts.

Most of the children in the daycare do not speak English at home so they are learning it from the teachers. It is important that adults avoid lazy language and use proper words and expressions. It is also wise to be aware of the widely used words and phrases that are actually cursing and inappropriate.

In similar way, the employees' responses have been classified in to themes and topics. Here is an example:

The advantages and disadvantages of diverse environment (Employees)

Advantages

Opportunity - It is an opportunity to work with and meet people from different backgrounds. It teaches a lesson about different cultures, beliefs, behavior, ways of living etc.

Experience for children - The children will also get to learn about difference, similarity and acceptance. They can learn different stories and plays from different cultures.

Disadvantages

Conflicts in views - at times, it can be difficult to keep similar views on how things should be done, or problems should be solved among colleagues. Similar conflicts can happen between teachers and parents. It can take very long time to convince parents to change some habits so that the children can have regularity between home and daycare. The difference can extend to legal aspect as what is right and acceptable in some cultures can be illegal here.

Prejudice - Knowingly or unknowingly, prejudice can affect the trust and relationships among people of different backgrounds.

After the data has been interpreted in a more conceptual way and put under sub topics, categorization was done from two perspectives. One is in the sense of broadening the subcategories and add more points so that there are less topics and more lists under each topic. The second is joining some of the responses from employees with responses from the managers. In that case, the data got synthesized and unified results were developed eventually. Here are some examples:

Table 4. Working and Managing international daycare

	Demanding	Valuable experience	Opportunity
Managers and teachers	<p>.It is very hard job and can be stressful. Managers should be ready for unexpected sudden changes. There is a need for flexibility and quick decision making.</p> <p>Internal conflict between learning the new and keeping the old</p> <p>Prejudice can make communication and collaboration extra challenging in all dimensions</p>	<p>It is a way to learn different cultures, meet with different people.</p> <p>People can learn from experience of different people</p> <p>Children can have an early understanding of difference and tolerance</p>	<p>Opportunity to help others and provide them with the knowledge we have</p> <p>Prepare children for globalized future</p>

Another example which is moderately different from the above mentioned is the classification of best managerial styles or support from managers' point of view and from employees' point of view. Instead of synthesizing it, I first put it side by side to see and compare it. This helps to identify and bridge any gap that exists.

Table 5. Best management styles

Managers' view	Employees' view
<p>Being role model in many ways: being on time, knowing well and being able to do the job well, being reliable, the employees should be able to look up to and ask for help when needed.</p> <p>Fairness - showing interest in the employees, their abilities and their growth in the company, being available, taking care of conflicts and other wrong doings in similar way among all workers.</p>	<p>Asking for commonality, regularity, clear and consistent instructions on how to do things. There is always a certain uncertainty on how to do the paper work as different managers would tell different instructions to the employees.</p> <p>Regular feedbacks will also help to check if the job is being done in accordance with the written documents such as curriculums and guidelines.</p>

The last stage in the analysis process is explanatory accounts. It is the latest stage in the analysis process and can be done only when the above two stages are completed. It attempts in finding patterns, why those patterns occur or building explanations from other evidences such as other studies or theoretical frameworks. (et al. 2004, 261) Explanatory accounts as separate chapter is put under the topic of Results.

7 RESULTS

7.1 International daycare

The International Childcare and Education Center, as the name suggests, is an international daycare where the education is mainly in English. It has multicultural clients with majority being Finnish children. The staff is also highly multinational and multicultural team. In I.C.E.C the curriculum is also international as it follows the national curriculum of England. Besides, some of the policies are also derived from the system of England however it is blended with the early childhood education and care policies of Finland. The children coming to all the branches of the day care are composed of many nationalities. There are majority Finnish children mixed with multinational kids of expats, diplomats and other foreigners residing in Finland. The teachers on the other hand are mainly from other countries different from Finland.

When employees start and see that the educational curriculum is different from their previous work places, they sometimes find it difficult to learn or they take some time to get used to it and at other times refuse to adapt to the new system. The managers were fairly clear that either employees learn and adapt to the new system or make their own decision. The respondents from the employee sample also agreed that anyone who wants to stay in the company should get familiar with the curriculum, policies and other guidelines in order to work and succeed.

In the company, not only the curriculum is foreign but also most of the employees and some of the parents are. It is truly multicultural showing all faces of being in a multicultural environment. Both the manager and staff emphasized that it has so many advantages and strong sides. They mentioned many advantages of working with diverse colleagues and multicultural families. Some of these are: the encounter of people from different cultural backgrounds, learning about new cultures, sharing different valuable life experience. They have also mentioned how differences affect their daily working lives. They are constantly tested with

tolerance, the need of understanding others and taking steps of changing oneself.

7.2 Diversity

Definition of diversity

It is clear from the responses of the participants that they believe that diversity is mainly about national and cultural differences thus they consider their team as diverse. Even though other traits of diversity such as religion have been mentioned occasionally, they all emphasized how the staff is diverse from the perspective of nationality. Nationality difference is highly prevalent that in one branch, as an example, 19 nationalities work together. In most of the branches it is almost that there are no two workers who are from same country, they are all from different countries. The count from staff training that all the employees were present shows that there are 37 different nationalities in the company. The dominant countries are Spain, Greece and Britain. There are also workers from America, Africa and Asia. Surprisingly, Fins are very few and some branches do not have any Finnish workers at all in their teams. Religion has been raised only by two of the managers. The other two did not put it as their base for characterizing diversity. Age has not been mentioned as a direct factor. However, life experience is highly related with age. All the managers have agreed that because of strict laws and regulations, there is almost no diversity among educational qualifications. All the papers from foreign awarding universities have gone through the Finnish Ministry of Education and been recognized to equivalent levels thus qualifications are very unified and equivalent.

Opportunity vs challenges

They defined diversity as source of rich cultural share point where people can learn a lot from each other. In childhood education and care, it is critical that the children get experience of diversity and tolerance from an early age. It can help in the process of creating a society that believes in

difference and harmony. In same way, adults can see through the new window towards the other side of the world that they have never experienced before. It is an opportunity to learn and know new things. Diverse work force brings diverse working styles, knowledge and skills which if used properly, can benefit everyone in the work environment. However, all the participants agreed that diversity has its own advantages and disadvantages. An interesting finding in this research was that all participants defined diversity from perspective of being multinational and multicultural. Thus, they agreed it is an opportunity from different points of views. It is an opportunity to learn different cultures and how to work peacefully where there is difference. It is also an opportunity to experience multiculturalism in work setting which can prepare them to tackle any ethnocentrism or other culture based challenges that later in life could be faced. The other angle that they looked at it was from beneficial opportunity for the kids who come for care. These children can learn about difference, acceptance and the exchange of cultural values from an early stage. Thirdly, both managers and staffs believed that this is great opportunity to help people learn new culture and get used to new living conditions.

Moreover, the diversity of the staff can also bring different knowhows in the team. Diverse people with diverse cultural backgrounds can take with them different beliefs, norms and behaviors that promote better work environment. Learning can happen among all the workers from each other when difference is encountered in a constructive way.

The participants were also frank in sharing their views on the disadvantage of diverse work force. The challenges of diversity emerge from two main angles. These are cultural difference and personality difference. The third independent source of challenge is bias. Culture based challenges include routines such as time management. In some cultures, it is not seen as violation of rules if a worker starts work ten minutes later than s/he should while in other cultures it is considered as violation of rules. Gender inequality and views towards female managers can create a tension between managers and employees. Religion and language are other

culture based differences that could make the functionality of diverse work team difficult. Some people are devout to their religions that they find it difficult to participate in parties and cultural events such as Halloween. Interaction is highly affected by language; the level of English being spoken by all workers is different as it is second language for most of them. It can set obstacles and create unnecessary misunderstandings. Besides, as the work put workers in direct contact with clients, diversity among clients can also set some challenges. Some parents follow child rearing and behavioral management techniques that are not in accordance with the culture and the policy of the daycare.

Difference in skills, knowledge, pedagogies, philosophies and understandings on how to do things, can result in to conflicts too. Personality based challenges are mainly related with the extent to which a person is willing to learn and incorporate new skills to add in to or replace own previous knowledge and experience. All participants firmly spoke that the stronger the personalities, the more challenging they become when it comes to opening their minds to new things. It is interesting how strong personality came at the front line in this discussion even though it was not emphasized as diversity trait. The employees fit in the system depending on how well they want to drop some of their old skills and learn new company based skills and knowledge. One manager also added later in the discussion that one employee resigned because she could not cope with the nature of her manager. Personality in regard with social interaction skills can also set a challenge in cases like the one mentioned above.

Bias is an important source of challenge where there are diverse group of people working and interacting together. Knowingly or unknowingly, it can affect the trust and relationship between workers. This was raised only in the discussion with employees.

7.3 Work consistency

Diversity vs consistency

Most of the participants agreed that consistency in work can be secured through policies and guidelines irrespective of diversity among workers. They believe that diversity does not alter the consistency of work. They are not directly related rather consistency is affected by the company's policies, guidelines and curriculums. Consistency is dependent on how well policies are followed and implemented in the company than the backgrounds of the people in the company. If the employees know the policy of the company and follow all the guidelines, despite diversity the job can be done in a similar way. However, one participant did not fully agree. She explained that people with strong personalities would insist their way even though they know the company's policies and guidelines. The direct answers of both groups of participants, have put great values on policies, guidelines and curriculums as unifying powers. However, I can derive from the overall discussion that there is higher probability of inconsistency of work among diverse work force than it would be with homogeneous team. All the challenges of diversity at work place that are mentioned in the above sub topic can negatively affect work consistency. In the case of child care and education, all the three factors; culture, personality and bias can affect the quality and consistency of the work even though it is guided with same policy and guidelines.

Company's best practices in keeping consistency

During the discussion both the managers and the employees agreed that wherever there is high diversity, there a challenge of being similar in ways of behavior, beliefs, manners, expectations and interactions. However, both groups were also very convinced strong curriculum, policy and guidelines are the bases to keep consistency. They believed and strongly commented that despite differences, all employees need to understand that the curriculum is the main guide that is followed to teach and take care of the children. If anyone is not willing to follow the policy or the guidelines provided by the company, then it is impossible to continue together with the company. Such strong stand from the management and the company side has been the best solution in keeping consistent service delivery.

7.4 Diversity management

Practices in the company

According to the learning and effectiveness paradigm, diversity is a means of learning and finding new ways for the business. Employees are seen as valuable resources. (Sippola 2007, 30; Thomas & Ely 1996, 86-90)

The company's recruitment approach is very open towards multicultural employees. This is clearly visible when one looks at the demographic figure of the employees of the company. It is not only that there are people from so many different countries but also the management of the company purposefully recruit such diverse workforce. However, none of the participants from both focus groups said directly that the company embraces diversity management as one of its management components. The managers emphasized the multipurpose of having diverse workforce but did not mention anything about the need of especial management to it. In the same manner, the employees did not also see the importance of diversity management until later in the discussion. In the beginning of the discussion when the different aspects of diversity management that are practiced were discussed, one of the employees answered the following:

Our diversity is not managed because it has not caused any problem. But with parents who for example give you the permission to smack their child if the child is misbehaving, you have to manage this diversity of understanding how to manage the child's behavior through conversation and explaining that such ways are not allowed here.

From the above answer and the rest of the discussion, diversity management among the participants of the discussion was understood from three perspectives.

The first one is as a problem solving method that is needed only when there is a problem caused by diversity. Diversity management here is understood very narrowly as a conflict resolution if the conflict is caused by the diversity of workers.

The second is the perspective taken by most of the employees. They were outspoken about their lack of knowledge in the topic. For them what matters or what they can tell is if the management is treating them well or not or in other words if employees are treated fairly or unfairly. Later, they put a wish that if their status in the country and knowledge of Finnish language is put in to consideration and they are provided with valuable information that will make their working life in the company and in Finland in general easier.

The third perspective is the one that is mostly taken by the managers. In their opinion, regardless of their diversity, employees should be presented with policies, guidelines and the company's philosophical views so that they learn and embrace it well.

It is possible to conclude from the above discussion that the company believes that the best way to manage the diverse team and secure consistency in the job is making sure that they understand the company's system and follow it regardless of their previous knowledge and experience.

Future expectations

There were three major areas for what could be said the future managerial plans/expectations. The first of this is introduction or the time when an employee starts work in the company. This is very critical phase that many employees remember it after being in the company for years for the better or worse. The employees wish for better introduction with all the paper works such as weekly planning sheets, activity planning sheets and report forms. Managers have great role in making this wish come true. The employees wish that the managers take their time to sit down and go through details before hand rather than telling them after they assumed their responsibilities and are in the middle of work.

The second one is in the area of relationship between managers and employees. Managers believe that being role model can enhance motivation among employees. They also believe that the employees can

only rely on them and put trust to ask for any help, assistance or guidance they need. The managers said that they also need to be available physically and emotionally to their employees to earn their trust and smoothen their work relationships. They also believe in being fair but firm. The friendly relationship that they want to build should not hinder them from proper intervention when things go wrong in the working process or employees make mistakes. On the other hand, the employees wish for their relationships with their managers to be compassionate with realistic expectations given the time and resource.

The third perspective is continuity of managerial guidance through regular feedbacks. The employees particularly felt that there is lack of regular feedback which always leaves a space for that fear of making mistakes and staying in them as no one guides them out. Employees expect more regular visits, checking of paper works and feedbacks to keep track. The participants emphasized that there is lack of commonality. The paper works are very ambiguous as different managers could give different guides on how to fill them. It would be beneficiary to have some written document that could be used as reference on how to do paper works. In general, different managers should not make the company look like a different company as long as same policies and guidelines are followed. The management style should reflect mainly the values and vision of the company instead of own personality.

Lastly, empowerment of employees was an issue raised by both groups. The managers emphasized that they want to create an environment where employees feel empowered to question their managers instead of agreeing with all that comes from their managers.

The employees in general wished that they would have felt empowered to say no and negotiate with some of the unrealistic demands of their managers in the beginning.

8 DEVELOPMENTAL TOOL FOR DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

From this project, the main results show that ICEC kindergarten is rich in diversity. The diversity is also valued and appreciated through different events that mainly happen to celebrate the cultural and national diversity of employees and clients. On the other hand, from management's point of view diversity management has not been part of its philosophy. This does not infer that there were no traces of diversity in the management's holistic approach rather it was not merely adopted and purposefully integrated. The employees' sample group were not any different than the managers in this regard that know very little on the subject of diversity management.

Based on the findings, I found workshop to be the best way for diversity management to find its way into the company. Workshop is the best way to learn practical matters as it engages participants in to intensive discussions and activities on particular subject.

The subject of the workshop, which is attached in the appendices, primarily introduces diversity management in broader sense to the upper and middle management groups of the company. The workshop mainly focuses on introducing the concept, key philosophies and main paradigms of diversity management.

Once the managers get familiar with it, the second most important issue can be addressed which is reasoning why it is advantageous to assimilate diversity management. It is very important to explain why it is important to adopt diversity management in their managerial service. The company is a well doing company and the managers are satisfied with how the diversity is managed and the work is done with consistent quality despite some challenges. There must be convincing points in the workshop in order to encourage the company to adopt diversity management in order to foster better work quality, consistency and better working environment.

The third content of the workshop is to talk about and address how this new managerial style can be included and implemented in the company's overall management. It will be practical to design strategies and some start

up plans on how to bring it to the company. Unit managers also will need some introductory tools that they need to take with them not only to apply it in their units but also to be able to introduce it to their staffs.

In the process of carrying out this project based thesis work, I have presented the main findings from the two focus group discussions to the managers. The aim was to involve them and get their opinions to reach conclusions and any possible recommendations together. I sent e-mails to all the managers who participated to let them have a look at the main findings. The purpose was also to get feedbacks, opinions and suggestions on what could be the final product of the project so that it is not solely my idea but also theirs as input. Some of them suggested that it is better for me to use all the information that I have gathered and reach a conclusion on my own and later present it to them while the others did not comment or replied my e-mail at all.

At this stage I met my thesis supervisor to discuss my next move. She encouraged me to make my findings better appealing and try to convince the managers to find some time for my workshop presentation. Even though I had given up and did not do anything other than a suggestion that workshop could have been a good way to present my recommendation, I agreed with my thesis supervisor. Once again, I decided to push further so I put my findings in a PowerPoint format which was short, precise and yet had the main findings in a clear visible way. I also managed to prepare my workshop PowerPoint during this time. It was a great learning experience for me that I took the actual step to get ready for a workshop. I read about it further and how to aim and prepare a content. While preparing these presentations, I also contacted my manager and explained to her the situation so that she could also help me in organizing a meeting with the managers group for one last time. Meanwhile, I showed my new workshop PowerPoint presentations for my thesis supervisor and she commented on them. I kept on asking quite often from my manager what the responses of the other managers are but the time and resources available for the managers did not let it happen. Unfortunately, I was not able to carryout the workshop as planned. But the full content is attached as appendix 3.

Research based development project takes time and resource as other research works do. Besides, the results found were too valuable to be left unused. As a result, I reproduced the content of the workshop in to information package form that could be read and give glimpse why diversity management is helpful for work consistency and better service production.

Diversity management as a tool

If all the managers take time to look at themselves, it will be very interesting for them to find out why they think the way they think, why they like the things they like and not the other ones. What is so important for them in their work lives and why, what is least priority, what makes them so upset and what will not bother much...the list can go very long. The important point here is that they will get the chance to see how different cultural layers have shaped them in to who they are today. Then it will be easy to understand how the staff working under them are also very diversified in many visible and invisible ways. In the day to day work, they have all agreed that keeping consistency and letting all their staff understand why the work should be done in a certain way and not in other ways is one of the demanding part of their job. In the results chapter, the potential causes of inconsistency have been discussed in detail.

I would like now to suggest a different way of approaching the problem. In child care and education; curriculum, policy and guidelines are very vital and come in all hierarchial orders from national to city and organizational levels. As a result, main ideologies cannot be put here for negotiation of change however their implementation in consistent way can be done differently. Managers can sometimes ask their diverse employees what different know-hows they have to implement the curriculum. It is important to give the diversity a chance to offer what it has than always following the set up and known ways of carrying out activities.

Diversity management can also be done from point of understanding needs of diverse groups. Companies benefit from the wellbeing of their

human resource and one way of achieving is that recognizing diverse needs and addressing them accordingly.

Diversity management can also help to tackle deep rooted bias and discrimination that has been there for many years among the society. Managers can deliberately convey messages that could encourage employees and clients to open their minds and learn about people belonging to different groups.

It is time to ask for the company and its management team that if they have such diverse team, isn't it weak to have a human resource policy that would be used to less heterogeneous group of employees? The company has chosen to be multicultural and took a big step that many organizations in Finland still find very hard. Now, it is time to move forward and choose to manage the diversity with a knowingly chosen managerial style.

Here are key suggestions:

- In self assessment or self-reflective forms that are done by employees, it will be helpful to add questions that the person can say about their unique know-hows, skills and experiences depending on their diverse background.
- During manager-employee meetings or other similar forums that are held to recognize the needs and wellbeings of employees, addressing questions can be formulated in a way diverse group of people have the room to say their diverse challenges or needs.
- It is a fact that different forms of discrimination such as racism and sexism exist in our society until today. Managers have responsibility to make sure that minorities are getting fair and equal treatment formally and informally. Employees can be invited to seminars that are aimed at enhancement of tolerance and acceptance. Managers can also do some brain stormings with the employees to see what could help best.
- It is also beneficial for the company in many ways to join corporate responsibility networks like FIBS. ICEC kindergarten can benefit

from all the information and consultation they offer for their member organizations. Most of the members who have signed diversity charter have improved their diversity management and as a result work has been improved and businesses have become more profitable. It is also a positive image for the company that it proves that it is acting responsibly in the community that it is serving. This is the link to FIBS <http://www.fibsry.fi/fi/english/home>

9 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Ethics

As it is the case for both qualitative and quantitative research approaches, the primary demand is the protection of human subjects (Haber and LoBiondo-Wood 2006, 166). This thesis has followed the ethical procedures right from the beginning to the end. I have collected data two times through one data collection method which is focus group discussion. The method has ethical considerations that any researcher should carefully examine and follow before, at the time of employing them and afterwards.

Like other methods, focus group discussion requires ethical considerations and implementations. The first of these is informing participants all that they need to know. It is important that they are informed about the topic of discussion, the process of the discussion and how the results are going to be used. I have informed the participants the purpose and the topic of my thesis from the very beginning. I have also sent them the literature reviews I used so that they can familiarize themselves with the topic. Focus groups or group discussions in general are useful to further explore a topic, provide a broader understanding of why the target group may behave or think in a particular way, and assist in determining the reason for attitudes and beliefs. However, it can also be disadvantageous when it comes to privacy or anonymity. The fact that people are sitting together in a group can trace pass privacy and their wish to stay anonymous. There is also risk of the discussion being dominated by few people and the others may not have their says as much. In the focus group discussions that I had, I have taken in to consideration this kind of situations During the discussion, as a facilitator, I have tried to help turns rotate and everyone had relatively an equal opportunity and time given to share their views on the topics under discussion. I have also been very careful in turning the audio recordings to script. Throughout the process of analyzation, ethical consider

ations were vital for me. I took all the necessary care at each step of the data analysis that responses have been properly managed to reach results without the addition of my personal point of view. I have also been very careful in keeping confidentiality that my findings are kept at general level that readers could not relate it to individuals.

In the last data collection, I have tried to collaborate with managers on how to embrace diversity management in the daily managerial work and foster work consistency.

I had also to keep balance between my over lapping roles. I am researcher in this research based thesis project. At the same time, I am also an employee of the company who adds up to the diverse workforce. I have been very careful not to be biased and add in any way my own views to the findings of this research. I have kept neutral position.

After the completion, the thesis could be used and shared according to the agreements that have been reached between I.C.E.C Play 'n' Learn Oy, Lahti University of Applied Sciences and me.

9.2 Evaluation

Judith and Geri ed. (2006, 179) have put key points shown below in figure 2 as critiquing criteria. I found them simple and applicable to evaluate this thesis. Here follows each key point and their reflection of the thesis.

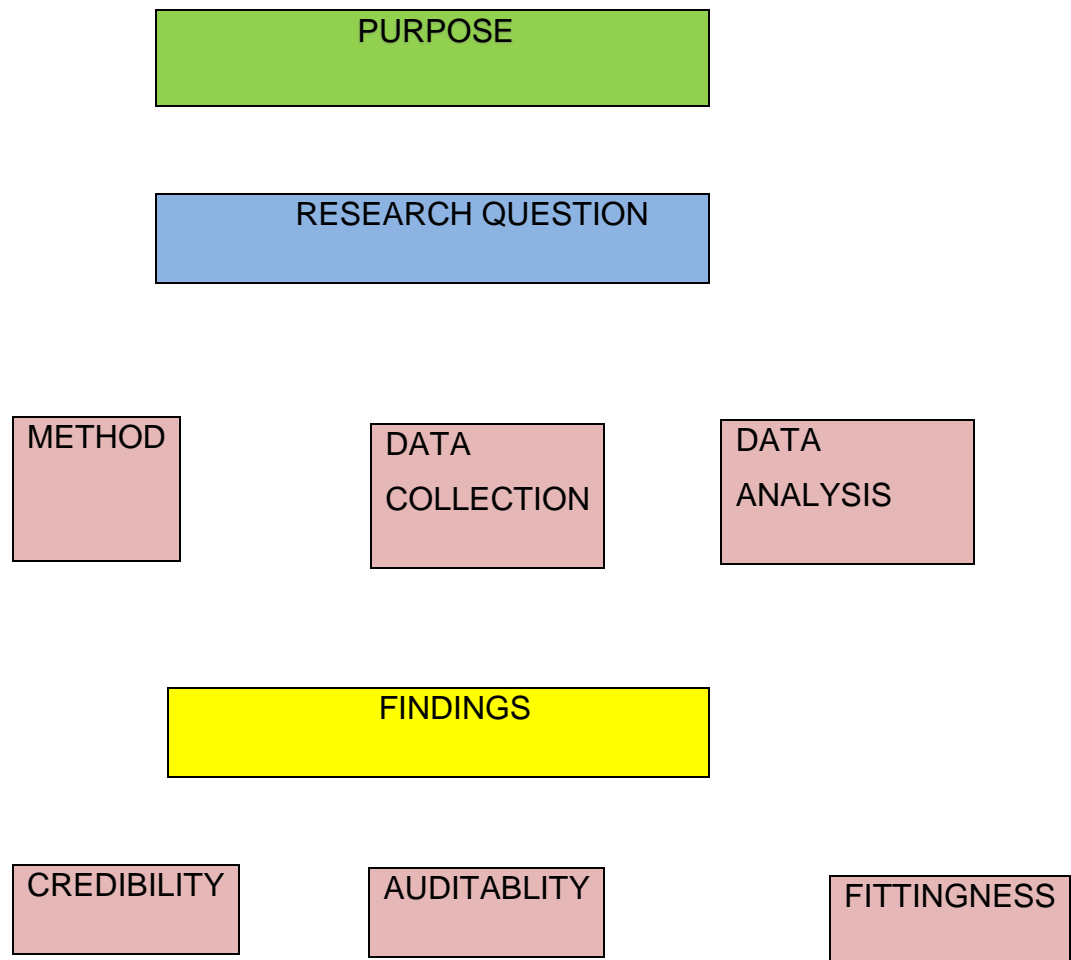


FIGURE 2. Research evaluation (Judith and Geri ed.2006,179).

Purpose – the purpose of the thesis is in general to discuss diversity management in Finland. As it is such a vast topic, it was narrowed down to

diversity and consistency in the public sector with case study of an international English kindergarten.

Research question – are fully focused on the case study. That was appropriate as it is only possible to answer them through the data collected. The questions were specific and properly focused that at the end of the project, it was possible to address them well.

Data collection method – I have found the method to be very effective and had no second thought till the last moment about it. Focus group was the right kind of method to get together small group of people and talk about a topic that they know around same level. In that way method was successful and was able to generate the desired data.

Data collection – the data collection was very satisfying with the managers and it went very well. It was also smooth and open discussion with the sample employees however the lack of knowledge on the subject had set some limitations on the flow of the focus group discussion. The thesis also clearly shows the method used and the details of the process.

Data analysis – it was very successful process in this thesis. The model has served its purpose well that I was able to get the most out of the raw data collected. The steps in the data analysis process are clearly described in chapter 3.

Credibility – the participants were the ones with firsthand experience of the subject topic. The managers and the workers, this fact makes it credible. However, the length of time taken to observe and fully understand the situation might not be enough. Time table of the participant's and mine has limited us from taking extensive time.

Auditability – the project based thesis report is written in detail showing the step-by-step of the process enabling the reader to follow the core thoughts and findings.

Fittingness – the findings in this work can be applicable outside of the case study. They are based on literature reviews on the diversity

management and its utilization in different countries. However, the recommendations are company specific so that unless it is a company with exactly same situation, further data collection and analysis of the situation is recommended.

9.3 Continuous development

Global mobility and globalization are the reality of our time. Among other things this results to changing demographics of labor markets. In other words, diversity focused management is also the reality of our time which has attracted management scholars and practitioners. (Olsen and Marins 2012, 1.) The focus of the project based thesis is to examine how a company with diverse workers apply diversity management to keep consistent service delivery to its clients. As much as it is today's reality, it will head also towards our tomorrow. This subject is going to be the reformation and development programs of many more companies in the future. As a result, it has to be studied, examined, researched and practiced in an ongoing project to improve work and life quality of our society with diverse workforce.

The International Childcare and Education Center (I.C.E.C) could begin with the introduction of the subject diversity management into its managerial style. It always takes time to try out new ideologies or philosophies. It is a process of implementation, evaluation and development. The results of this research based project could benefit the company in a way that now diversity management could be introduced and the diversity of the employees could be utilized at its best. In addition, the consistency of the work could be achieved with less strive as a result of the newly introduced managerial style besides what has been there working well already.

10 DISCUSSION

This research based development project has raised three important subjects as leading questions. The aim was to address these questions, find answers for them and produce an outcome.

The first of these questions was the views of the managers on diversity of their team and how it is affecting work consistency in their units. Besides, it also sought answers if the managers have been implementing diversity management methods of any sort. Based on the results, the managers strongly believe that they have a very diverse workforce. In their views, diversity is mostly positive which has many advantages for the children's learning and development. They also pointed out that it is sharing point for the staff where they learn about different cultures, ways of living and academic experiences. However, they also mentioned that diversity can set a challenge to do the job in consistent and similar way as the company's policies and guidelines. The diversity of the workers that is exhibited in many different diversity traits make it challenging to achieve uniformity. Despite the challenges, through time and regular effort, it has been possible to keep consistency at satisfactory level.

The most interesting points raised in this regard were the diversity traits which were strongly pointed out to be the base of diversity in terms of defining the team as diverse and which ones were later raised as challenges of consistent service delivery.

Figure 1 shows great model that is formulated by the known social psychologist Geert Hofstede. It has six cultural levels that an individual can belong to simultaneously. These cultural affiliation levels could also show how the classic essentialist concept of culture has increasingly been replaced with a new meaning of culture as based on shared or partly shared patterns of meaning and interpretations. This opposes the old view of the essentialist which mainly claims consistent and complex patterns of behaviors being shared by a group as culture.

In this regard, culture is mainly relational. All the different identities such as national, corporate or organizational are symbolic practices in relation to or in contrast with others. This theory explains it better that an individual embodies unique combination of personal, cultural and social experiences which in turn makes any communication and negotiation intercultural. My respondents had mixed answers of diversity and which ways this diversity has been beneficial and challenging. At times, it could be very difficult to describe any individual's characters as culture caused and personality caused as they both could exist in fluid and contingent states.

Furthermore, in this different and many times overlapping cultural levels, it could be difficult to determine which one is cultural identity and which one is professional behavior. A good example could be generational level culture. Colleagues that are of similar age and different home countries might share similar interests in music choice than two generations of people who are from same country. Another example could be the acculturation of employees in the company. As the staff sample group pointed out, sometimes different managers can train employees differently. When these workers come together to work, consistency can be a challenge despite their nationality or age similarity. (Haastrup, 1996 as quoted by Holden 2002, 57)

Culture shock is another popular term that is used in cross cultural working environments. According to Holden (2002, 30-31), cultural shock is not the ultimate reason why knowledge transfer and exchange is challenging. It has more to do with but not limited to identity construction. In the constructionist view, professional culture is one of the defining factors of employees' identities. As in this case study, people find it difficult to change and get in to the new system completely because it is a process of losing one's own long built identity and replacing it with a new one. The process could be painful and unpleasant that some resist change on how they carry out their professional duties.

Most of the employees in our discussion agreed that work consistency can be difficult to achieve as some people have strong personality that no matter how much good information is provided, it is yet impossible to bring

the desired change. According to this theory, these kinds of people actually struggle not to lose their identity so this gives better tool for managers to understand and help their employees in their process of learning and settling.

During the discussion with both groups of managers and employees, it was clear that diversity management was not something familiar within the day to day management philosophy. The managers in general described how they manage their team, what ideologies or philosophies they have behind and how they try their best to keep consistent quality of service for the clients. Nevertheless, even without deliberate plan and implementation, diversity management has been there. Among the three diversity management paradigms that were developed by Thomas and Ely (1996) as quoted by Sippola (2007, 29) discrimination - and - fairness paradigm has its parts being implemented in the company. In this paradigm, the main focus is equal opportunity and fair treatment through legislative actions. The managers emphasized on the same treatment of all workers regardless of difference. This makes half of this paradigm however the other half is about providing job opportunities to minorities who are disadvantaged and discriminated. In I.C.E.C, the recruitment is open to but not aimed at ethnic minorities and nationalities. The employment process looks for certain educational qualification and work experience than national identity or ethnic position of applicants in the society. This falls in the third paradigm of diversity management which is access - and – legitimacy (Sippola 2007, 30). The company is open for the diversity in its employees' recruitment as it has been proved to be beneficial in many aspects however the inside culture has not been deliberately built to keep diversity and make the best out of it. The main reason for the absence seems to be lack of information and knowledge on the subject.

The employees' response was similar to that of the managers that they believed that diversity could affect consistency. They insisted that difference in background such as education, work experience, life experience in general can affect relationship among workers and their

attitude and ethics towards their roles in the company. They also strongly praised how cultural diversity has been beneficial for them. They listed many advantageous such as learning new cultures, sharing new life experiences, sharing skills and knowledge and setting good example of multiculturalism for the children that they teach.

In terms of diversity management, they openly spoke that they do not know much about the subject matter. Their knowledge is not any further than observing their team and saying that it is diverse in terms of nationality, culture and other traits. This has turned our talk during the focus group discussion from talking about diversity management to their perception, experience and expectation of management in their work place. It was meaningless to talk about something that they said did not know much about. The employees are mainly early childhood teachers and do not have any studies or experiences related with management. As a result, much of their perception and knowledge of the subject is from their experience at their work places. This is one of the main reasons that I concluded that workshop for the introduction of diversity management is the first step to integrate the concept in the managerial system. It has to be introduced and learned to become part of the system and for that the managers are the priority targets who can later introduce it to their teams as a subject and as technique.

To conclude, both sample groups shared similar meanings on the main topics of the research. They shared similar definition of diversity and what makes a group diverse, they also shared similar knowledge on the subject of diversity management. The company is diverse in its work team and that is a step ahead already. Now the question is why and how to be effective with the diversity it embraces. Both managers and workers strongly believed that policies and guidelines are the pillars of consistency and efficiency. I have no argument in this statement to be true because it is deeply right and correct. However, all the findings discussed about drew me towards a conclusion that there is a need for the introduction of diversity management. These policies and guidelines are exactly the ones that they would use for a very monolithic group of workers and has no

especial tool to manage diversity and exploit the rich resource within it. The diversity of the team is an additional value if it is managed in a way that targets at making the most out of it than the expectation of assimilation to the one and only organizational culture that exists. A workshop based on this could have benefited the company, employees and the service consistency and quality of the company.

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire - 1

1. How long have you been working as a manager in the company?
2. How do you describe being a manager in a kindergarten?
3. What are the challenges and opportunities of managing an international kindergarten?
4. Are the employees in your branch diverse? How do you describe the diversity of the employees? (in what ways are they diverse?) ? (Is there one major group to which others can be considered minority?)
5. Can you name some of the educational backgrounds and awarding countries of your staff?
6. How do you describe the advantages and disadvantages of having multicultural staff? How do you relate diversity of employees with routines and consistency? (positive relationship, negativr relationship or unrelated?)
7. Do you have any integration/introduction programs for new staff members? If so what kind?
8. Have you ever felt personally being challenged in managing diverse workforce towards similar job?
9. What method or approach has been working best for you regarding consistency?

Questionnaire - 2

1. Let's introduce ourselves (qualification, country of origin, how long have you been working for the company)
2. How do you remember the first few weeks when you started working here? Was it easy to get used the system, get familiar with the curriculum?
3. Thinking of your experience as a new employee, what could have been done better?
4. Let's talk about diversity...how do you define it? Do you think that you are working in a diverse team? Why?

Based on the answer for no.3...

5. Can you mention the positive and negative sides of working with people from different backgrounds?
6. How do you describe or put diversity and work consistency?
7. Do you think diversity management is embraced in the work environment? What aspects of diversity management can you mention?
8. At this moment (after working for the company for about one year or more), what do you expect from your managers to make the job requirements clear and consistent among all the employees? (Especially in relation to the diversity of the team?)

DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND WORK CONSISTENCY

Objectives

- To get familiarized with the topic of diversity management
- To discuss, analyze and learn the subject
- To see the possibilities of integrating diversity management as part of ICEC's management policy

Culture and diversity

Culture

- An earlier and basic definition was made by Edward Burnett Tylor, Culture is that complex whole which includes the knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2000)
- Is defined by Geert Hofstede as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one category of people from another.

Hofstede(1994) identified six broad levels of culture

- I. National level
- II. Regional, ethnic, religion, linguistic...or other sub categories within a nation
- III. Gender level
- IV. Generation level
- V. Social class
- VI. For employed people an organizational or corporate Level:

How they have been socialized by their work organization

How do we identify our cultural identity based on the above dimensions?

How do we identify our colleagues or employees?

Lets discuss which of the dimensions have stronger effect on our work performance?

Diversity

- Roosevelt has redefined the term as non synonymous with difference but It encompasses difference and similarity.
- Difference is on qualities.

Diversity management

What is it?

- It is an element related with organizational and managerial practices that is aimed at enhancing the value of diversity aimed at all employees.
- Started in public sector and later expanded to business sector
- The aim has also evolved from fair representation of minorities to attracting, retaining and managing diverse workforce.
- Currently it is HR practice which is aimed at creating the environment for diverse workforce to realize their full potential.
- Inclusion vs uniqueness
- Social exchange theory
- Simultaneous management of difference and similarity

Why do we need diversity management in ICEC?

- Because we are rich in diversity
- It could benefit the company
- It could benefit employees and clients

Current status of diversity management in ICEC

- Equal opportunity of employment
- Recognition of the benefits of diversity
- Recognition of the challenges of diversity

Challenges of diversity

Time management

Gender bias

Views towards managers

Interaction/personality

Language

Prejudice

Advantages of diversity

Opportunity

Valuable experience

Cultural share point

Some of the findings from focus group discussion

Next possible steps

- Diversity management could be the next developmental planning topic
- Deliberate steps towards the integration of diversity management in the managerial practices
- Joining organizations like FIBS to get practical consultancy

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